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Contribution of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, in all its aspects, to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to decision 2004/1 of the Commission on Population and Development in which the Commission decided to consider in 2005 the contribution of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, in all its aspects, to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

This report concludes that full implementation of the Programme of Action will significantly contribute to the achievement of the universally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

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Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
	Introduction	1	3
I.	Population trends relevant for development	2–8	3
II.	Importance of human rights	9–11	5
III.	Contribution of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to the achievement of universally agreed development goals	12–50	6
	A. Achieving sustainable development and ensuring environmental sustainability	13–16	6
	B. Eradication of poverty	17–24	7
	C. Reduction of hunger	25–26	9
	D. Achievement of universal primary education	27–28	10
	E. Gender equality and the empowerment of women	29–33	10
	F. Improvement of health	34–45	12
	1. Reducing mortality in childhood	35–36	12
	2. Improving maternal health	37–40	13
	3. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	41–45	14
	G. Challenges of changing population and age distributions	46–48	15
	1. Improving livelihoods in an urbanizing world	46–47	15
	2. Population ageing	48	16
	H. Developing a global partnership for development	49–50	16
IV.	Conclusions	51–57	17

Introduction

1. The outcomes of the United Nations conferences convened during the 1990s set an ambitious development agenda reaffirmed by the United Nations Millennium Declaration[1] in September 2000. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, being one of the major United Nations conferences of the decade, addressed all population aspects relevant for development and provided in its Programme of Action[2] a comprehensive set of measures to achieve the development objectives identified. Given the crucial importance of population factors for development, the full implementation of the Programme of Action and the key actions for its further implementation[3] will significantly contribute to the achievement of the universally agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration. The present report discusses the relevance that particular actions contained in those documents have for the attainment of universally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It also describes the key population trends relevant for development and the human rights basis that underpins key conference objectives and recommendations for action.

I. Population trends relevant for development

2. The goal of development is to improve the quality of life of all people. In that sense, population is at the core of development. In 2005, 753 million, or 11 per cent, of the 6.5 billion inhabitants of the world live in the least developed countries. Between 2005 and 2015, the least developed countries as a whole are expected to absorb nearly a quarter of all population growth in the world. High fertility levels characterize the majority of the least developed countries. Consequently, their populations are still young, with 39 per cent of their inhabitants being children under age 15. Levels of extreme poverty in most of the least developed countries are high: over 20 per cent of their overall population live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than US$ 1 per day, and in 10 of them that proportion is higher than 40 per cent. Although fertility levels have started to decline in some of the least developed countries, the desired number of children remains high. Nevertheless, in the majority of the least developed countries, the number of children that women have surpasses the number desired, suggesting that universal provision of family planning services could result in a reduction of unwanted fertility.

3. The rest of the developing world, whose population amounts to 4.5 billion, includes the two population giants: China, with 1.3 billion people, and India, with 1.1 billion. In China, fertility is already well below 2 children per woman, whereas in India it is about 3 children per woman. The process of population ageing is therefore more advanced in China, where nearly 10 per cent of the population are aged 65 years or over. In India, the equivalent proportion is 5 per cent. However, China has a smaller proportion of children (22 per cent) than India (29 per cent) and China's dependency ratio, that is to say, the number of children and elderly persons per 10 persons of working age, is 4 compared with India's dependency ratio, which is 6. In both countries, the proportion of persons living in extreme poverty is significant, but the proportion in China (17 per cent) is about half that in India (35 per cent).

4. Most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are already far advanced in the transition to low fertility. Average fertility in the region is currently 2.5 children

per woman. Children under age 15 account for 30 per cent of the population and persons aged 65 years or over account for 6 per cent. There are about 6 dependants (children and the elderly) per every 10 adults of working age and that ratio is expected to continue declining as fertility falls even further. Although levels of extreme poverty tend to be below 10 per cent in most of Latin America and the Caribbean, countries in Central America tend to have higher levels of extreme poverty and most Latin American countries are characterized by the prevalence of very unequal income distributions. A major concern in the region is therefore the reduction of this inequality.

5. Population trends vary considerably in the remaining developing countries, with current fertility ranging from less than 1.5 children per woman in Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Korea to over 5 children per woman in the Congo and Nigeria. On average, these countries have a fertility of about 4 children per woman, considerably higher than that in Latin America and the Caribbean and in India. Because of the higher average fertility of these countries, the proportion of children in their population stands at 35 per cent, whereas the proportion of elderly amounts to just 3 per cent. The number of dependants per 10 adults of working age is 7, close to the value of 8 in the least developed countries. Hence, like the least developed countries, the higher-fertility countries in this group would most likely benefit from increased efforts to reduce unwanted fertility. The countries in this group located in sub-Saharan Africa tend to have high levels of extreme poverty, often surpassing 20 per cent, while levels of extreme poverty tend to be lower in the Asian and Northern African countries in this group.

6. In developed countries, fertility declined much earlier than in the developing world and has been very low (below 2 children per woman) since the 1980s. Consequently, population declined in 17 developed countries during 2000-2005 and during 2005-2015 will do so in 25 of them, including Italy, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Furthermore, population ageing is more advanced in developed countries, where over 15 per cent of the population is aged 65 years or over and just 17 per cent is under age 15. The dependency ratio in the developed world is currently under 5 children and elderly persons per 10 adults of working age but it is rising and is expected to reach 7 by 2050.

7. Rising dependency ratios are also expected in China over the next 40 years but not in India, Latin America and the Caribbean and the rest of the developing world taken as a whole. In all groups and regions, however, the proportion of elderly is expected to rise as the proportion of children falls with declining fertility. The expected reductions in fertility are consistent with the continued implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and would be less likely to materialize in certain regions if the objective of providing family planning services to all who needed and wanted them was not met.

8. The world today encompasses, therefore, countries at all stages of the demographic transition, that is to say, the transition from a regime of high fertility and high mortality producing low population growth to one where both fertility and mortality are low and produce again low rates of population change. The fact that, during the transition, mortality reductions usually precede fertility reductions leads to a period of rapid population growth. The end of that period of rapid growth has been reached or is within reach of about two fifths of humanity today. Another two

fifths of the world population is already advanced on the path to lower population growth, but the remaining fifth is still growing very rapidly, largely because it has barely begun the transition to low fertility. Furthermore, for all the countries that are highly affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the transition to lower mortality has been interrupted, and the epidemic is having major detrimental effects on both population trends and socio-economic development. Bearing this context in mind is therefore crucial in assessing to what extent the implementation of the Programme of Action can contribute to the achievement of the agreed development goals, since its recommendations for action are not equally relevant for all countries.

II. Importance of human rights

9. Respect for human rights underpins the attainment of development because if a person's human rights are not safeguarded and respected that person's well-being is undermined. The Programme of Action underscores the importance of human rights by reiterating several of them in the principles set forth in its chapter II. Furthermore, a number of objectives and recommendations contained in the Programme of Action are justifiable not only because they lead to development or have positive impacts on the socio-economic status of people, but because they are an expression of the fundamental rights of the individual. For instance, article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[4] states that "(e)veryone has the right to education" and that "(e)lementary education shall be compulsory". Both the Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals reaffirm this right in setting out the goal of achieving universal primary education for both girls and boys by 2015. Similarly, article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child[5] calls for a reduction of infant and child mortality; appropriate prenatal and post-natal care for mothers; and the development of preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning education and services. The Programme of Action contains specific recommendations and goals to make these rights a reality, goals that are consistent with those included in the Millennium Development Goals with regard to the reduction of mortality in childhood and the improvement of maternal health.

10. A key aspect of the Programme of Action is its emphasis on measures to advance gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women as a matter of right. As with education, this goal is important in itself and need not be justified in terms of its likely impact on development. The Programme of Action underscores that the "human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights" (chap. II, principle 4). Such a recognition is also reflected in the Millennium Development Goal of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

11. In sum, implementing the Programme of Action in all its aspects would not only contribute to the attainment of a number of universally agreed development goals but also ensure that all people enjoy fully certain key human rights.

III. Contribution of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to the achievement of universally agreed development goals

12. The overriding goal of the Programme of Action, namely, to improve human welfare and promote sustainable development, is fully consistent with the universally agreed development goals and the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Indeed, some goals are almost identical in the Programme of Action and the Millennium Declaration like those, for instance, pertaining to the reduction of child mortality, the improvement of maternal health and the universal access to primary education. In general, the measures recommended in the Programme of Action and the key actions for its further implementation provide a more comprehensive, explicit and detailed set of guidelines than those implied by the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, the Programme of Action recognizes and makes explicit the synergies existing among the various development goals, so that they are mutually reinforcing. For instance, the reduction of poverty can have significant positive effects on the increase of educational attainment and the improvement of health, and achievement of the latter two would reinforce the reduction of poverty.

A. Achieving sustainable development and ensuring environmental sustainability

13. The key development goal for the international community is to achieve sustainable development as a means to ensure human well-being, equitably shared by all people today and in the future. The Programme of Action also has this as an overriding goal. According to the Programme of Action, the achievement of sustainable development requires that the interrelationships between population, resources, the environment and development be fully recognized, properly managed and brought into a harmonious, dynamic balance (principle 6). Because population is expected to increase substantially, especially in developing countries, the Programme of Action recognizes the usefulness of achieving a lower population growth as early as possible. It notes that in many countries, slower population growth has bought more time to adjust to future population increases, improving the ability of those countries to combat poverty, protect and repair the environment, and set the conditions for sustainable development (para. 3.14). Even the difference of a single decade in the transition to stabilization levels of fertility can have a considerable positive impact on quality of life (ibid.).

14. Consequently, the Programme of Action calls for the formulation of development strategies that realistically reflect the short-term, medium-term and long-term implications of population dynamics (para. 3.5) by integrating population into development and environment programmes that take into account patterns of production and consumption and seek to bring about population trends consistent with the achievement of sustainable development and the improvement of the quality of life (para. 3.6).

15. The Programme of Action notes that, to ensure the economic well-being of growing populations, investment in human resource development must be given priority, by increasing access to, inter alia, information, education, skill

development and employment opportunities (para. 3.17). It particularly underscores that existing inequities and barriers to women in the workforce should be eliminated and that women's access to productive resources, and ownership of land, and their right to inherit property, should be promoted and strengthened (para. 3.18). It encourages Governments and the private sector to foster job creation in all sectors by expanding trade and investment on an environmentally sound basis, increasing investment in human resource development, and developing democratic institutions and good governance (para. 3.21). Full implementation of these measures would contribute significantly to promoting development.

16. One of the major development goals is to ensure environmental sustainability, particularly by integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, so as to reverse the loss of environmental resources. The Programme of Action recognizes that meeting the basic human needs of growing populations is dependent on a healthy environment and it provides guidance on how to address the human dimensions of pressures on the environment. However, it also recognizes that "(d)emographic factors, combined with poverty and lack of access to resources in some areas, and excessive consumption and wasteful production patterns in others, cause or exacerbate problems of environmental degradation and resource depletion and thus inhibit sustainable development" (para. 3.25). To prevent or reverse these outcomes, the Programme of Action supports the objectives and actions agreed to in Agenda 21[6] and recommends that Governments "(i)mplement policies to address the ecological implications of inevitable future increases in population numbers and changes in concentration and distribution, particularly in ecologically vulnerable areas and urban agglomerations" (para. 3.29 (e)). This recommendation, in conjunction with the call for the integration of "demographic factors into environment impact assessments and other planning and decision-making processes aimed at achieving sustainable development" (para. 3.29 (a)), is fully consistent with the Millennium Development Goals and underscores the importance of population aspects in the pursuit of sustainable development. In this regard, although the Programme of Action recognizes that further increases in population numbers are inevitable, particularly in the poorer and most vulnerable countries, the implementation of its call for universal access to family planning services is expected to contribute to a reduction in the growth of the world's population.

B. Eradication of poverty

17. The Programme of Action recognizes that "(w)idespread poverty remains the major challenge to development efforts. Poverty is often accompanied by unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy, low status of women, exposure to environmental risks and limited access to social and health services ... including family planning. All these factors contribute to high levels of fertility, morbidity and mortality, as well as to low economic productivity. Poverty is also closely related to inappropriate spatial distribution of population, to unsustainable use and inequitable distribution of such natural resources as land and water, and to serious environmental degradation" (para. 3.13). The Programme of Action stresses that sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is essential to eradicating poverty, which in turn will contribute to slowing population growth and to achieving early population stabilization (para. 3.15).

18. In addition, research carried out during the 1990s has shown that changes in the age distribution of a population resulting from declining fertility can help accelerate economic growth. As fertility declines, the proportion of the population comprising children (persons under age 15) also declines, whereas the proportion of the population of working age increases, resulting in a decreasing dependency ratio (defined as the average number of children and elderly persons per 10 persons of working age). Provided jobs are available for the rising number of workers, a country can reap the benefits of increased production and lower costs associated with the decreasing proportion of dependants. This so-called demographic bonus can thus contribute significantly to economic growth and poverty reduction in contexts where governance facilitates human resource development and employment creation. The experience of the newly industrializing countries in Asia provides an example of this outcome. However, over the long run, the demographic bonus dissipates as the population continues to age and the dependency ratio rises again because of increasing proportions of elderly persons.

19. Implementation of the Programme of Action, particularly of measures to ensure that family planning services are affordable, acceptable and accessible to all who need and want them, can help reduce unwanted fertility, especially in the high-fertility countries of today, and thus trigger the process that gives rise to the demographic bonus. Because most of those high-fertility countries are among the least developed countries where levels of extreme poverty are high, the advantages that can be brought by the demographic bonus can also contribute to the reduction of poverty. However, realizing those advantages requires that economic growth be possible in the countries involved and that it be accompanied by substantial job growth.

20. Not all countries experiencing a decline of fertility have seen economic growth increase markedly as a result of the demographic bonus. Many of the countries in Latin America, for instance, have experienced slow economic growth despite being fairly advanced in the transition to low fertility. Most of them are middle-income countries where levels of extreme poverty are low. Relative poverty, however, is significant. Consequently, in addition to the positive effects that the demographic bonus might still have on economic growth, measures adopted to improve income distribution — for instance, income-generation and employment strategies directed to the poor, as suggested by the Programme of Action — would be of benefit to these countries.

21. The Programme of Action also recognizes that high priority should be given "to meeting the needs, and increasing the opportunities, for information, education, jobs, skill development and relevant reproductive health services, of all underserved members of society" (para. 3.19), who generally include the poor in both urban and rural areas. Its full implementation would therefore contribute to the reduction of inequalities within societies.

22. Compared with the objectives of the Programme of Action regarding poverty eradication, the Millennium Development Goal target relative to the eradication of extreme poverty is more modest, calling for a 50 per cent reduction, between 1990 and 2015, of the proportion of people living on less than US$ 1 a day. The countries most likely to contribute to the attainment of this goal at the global level, China and India, are both beneficiaries of the demographic bonus. Countries whose fertility is still high and where the proportion of the population living in extreme poverty is

also substantial would benefit from reductions of fertility brought about by the prevention of unwanted births, which the Programme of Action aims to achieve, but they cannot expect to attain the Millennium Development Goal target without implementing other macroeconomic measures to raise economic growth, create jobs and increase the income share of the poor.

23. Implementation of the Programme of Action can also contribute to the reduction of poverty by preventing pregnancy among young adolescents, reducing maternal mortality, and slowing the spread of HIV. Single adolescent women who become pregnant are more likely to drop out of school, thus compromising their future earning capacity and becoming more likely to end in poverty. Maternal mortality and the mortality of parents due to HIV/AIDS often lead to or exacerbate poverty.

24. The Programme of Action also acknowledges that international migration can have significant positive impacts on development, especially through remittances. Remittances have become the second largest source of foreign exchange for developing countries, following foreign direct investment (FDI). Furthermore, remittance levels are double those of official development assistance (ODA). Remittances benefit both the families that receive them and their communities through multiplier effects and may therefore contribute to the reduction of extreme poverty even if the very poor do not migrate.

C. Reduction of hunger

25. Because poverty and malnutrition often go together, sustained economic growth broadly shared is also necessary to reduce hunger, particularly in the least developed countries. The Programme of Action acknowledges the importance of attaining food security at all levels and calls for measures to strengthen food, nutrition and agricultural policies and programmes, and fair trade relations (para. 3.20). The Millennium Development Goal target of reducing by half, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people suffering from hunger is consistent with this call. Because there is no shortage of food worldwide, combating hunger implies providing people with the means of acquiring food. Fair trade is necessary to achieve this objective, since agricultural subsidies in developed countries distort world prices and hurt farmers in developing countries, thereby contributing to high rural poverty in the latter. In sub-Saharan Africa, where population growth has surpassed increases in agricultural productivity, food availability per capita has dropped, leading to rises in malnutrition and hunger. In that region, increases in agricultural productivity, reductions in population growth, improved governance and economic growth would together serve to reduce poverty and hunger.

26. Implementation of other recommendations in the Programme of Action — including improvements in education and gender equality, the achievement of better child health, the implementation of policies to address the impact of HIV/AIDS and urban poverty, and the provision of reproductive health services that reduce both unwanted fertility and maternal mortality — can also contribute to reducing hunger. Studies have shown that a mother's low educational attainment is the factor most consistently related to malnutrition among children in developing countries. With more education, as called for in the Programme of Action, women are better able to ensure the health and proper nutrition of their children. Enhancing the status of

women, particularly by providing them with access to income and resources, can also result in better intra-household distribution of food, thus preventing female malnutrition. Lastly, measures to prevent the spread of HIV are crucial in forestalling the potentially devastating effects that the HIV/AIDS epidemic, by debilitating or reducing the agricultural labour force, can have on agricultural productivity.

D. Achievement of universal primary education

27. The Programme of Action stresses the importance of achieving universal education by 2015, especially of girls (para. 11.6) and calls for the extension of education for all to the secondary and higher levels (paras. 11.6, 11.8 and 4.18). Thus, the goals regarding education set by the Programme of Action are similar to, but more ambitious than, the target for Millennium Development Goal 2, which is to ensure that universal primary education is achieved by 2015. By calling for the extension of education to the secondary level as well, the Programme of Action, if fulfilled, would accrue substantial benefits that could contribute to the attainment of other development goals, including the reduction of poverty and hunger through the effects that improvements in human capital might bring; the reduction of child mortality, of maternal mortality and of the spread of HIV; the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women; and the facilitation of sustainable development and possibly the conservation of natural resources. Gaining more education would also enhance the ability of young persons to use information technologies.

28. Improving educational attainment, particularly of girls, would also have an impact on population dynamics, since education is known to influence demographic behaviour with respect to nuptiality, fertility, health and migration. Education also affects the inter-generational formation of human capital, with the education of mothers influencing the educational attainment of children. Conversely, high fertility and rapid population growth have hindered the achievement of universal primary education in many developing countries, especially the least developed. Early marriage and pregnancy among adolescent women often curtail their education. Implementation of the Programme of Action, by preventing early marriage and pregnancy as well as unwanted births, would contribute to achieving universal primary education.

E. Gender equality and the empowerment of women

29. Both the Programme of Action and the United Nations Millennium Declaration call for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, recognizing that both are important in combating poverty, hunger and disease and in achieving sustainable development. However, the Programme of Action sets a broader agenda and provides more detailed guidance on how to achieve that goal, not only focusing on measures to improve the status of women but also including recommendations on the involvement and participation of men in realizing gender equality.

30. With regard to women, the Programme of Action stresses the importance of increasing their equal participation and equitable representation at all levels of the

political process; of improving their ability to earn income in occupations beyond the range of traditional ones so as to achieve economic self-reliance; and of ensuring their equal access to the labour market and social security systems; of ensuring their equal rights to buy, hold and sell property and land, obtain credit and negotiate contracts in their own name, and exercise their right to inheritance (paras. 4.4 and 4.6). The Programme of Action also underscores the need to eliminate all practices that discriminate against women and all forms of violence against women or girls (paras. 4.5, 4.9 and 4.10). Furthermore, it points out repeatedly that actions to enhance the welfare of people should be particularly tailored to meeting the needs of women and girls.

31. With respect to education, the Programme of Action states that "(e)ducation is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process" (para. 4.2). It therefore urges countries to ensure the widest and earliest possible access of girls and women to secondary and higher levels of education, as well as to vocational education and technical training. It also calls for the closing of the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005 (para. 11.8), providing guidelines on measures to keep girls and adolescents in school. Its implementation would therefore result in the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education as called for by the Millennium Development Goals.

32. Acknowledging that "full participation and partnership of both women and men are required in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for the care and nurturing of children and maintenance of the household" (para. 4.1), the Programme of Action puts considerable emphasis on the gender aspects of reproductive life, especially in relation to the maintenance of reproductive health and access to reproductive health-care services, including family planning. For women, having access to affordable, acceptable and convenient reproductive health-care services is essential to having control over their reproductive lives and to ensuring that the timing of their pregnancies fits with their family, education and work plans. Realizing the reproductive rights of women is therefore essential for their empowerment. However, according to the objectives stressed by the Programme of Action, both women and men should "have access to the information, education and services needed to achieve good sexual health and exercise their reproductive rights and responsibilities" (para. 7.36 (b)) and it is also important "to emphasize men's shared responsibility and promote their active involvement in responsible parenthood, sexual and reproductive behaviour, including family planning; prenatal, maternal and child health; prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV; prevention of unwanted and high-risk pregnancies; shared control and contribution to family income, children's education, health and nutrition; and recognition and promotion of the equal value of children of both sexes" (para. 4.27).

33. In essence, full implementation of the Programme of Action entails both the empowerment of women in all spheres of life and a greater involvement of men in the exercise of reproductive rights and responsibilities. The achievement of gender equality in those terms would not only be consistent with the improvement of the status of women as called for in the Beijing Platform for Action,[7] but also contribute to enhancing economic growth and reducing poverty through the growing and more productive participation of women in the economy; to reducing child mortality and improving maternal health because of the increasing education and decision-making

power of women; and to reducing the transmission of HIV by improving the willingness of men and women to accept responsibility for their own and their partner's sexual health.

F. Improvement of health

34. Good health is essential for the well-being of individuals and societies. In countries where poor health is common, labour productivity suffers. High rates of morbidity and mortality are still common in many low-income countries, especially those highly affected by infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. A major goal of the international community is to provide access to primary health-care services to all and to reduce the risks of contracting the major infectious diseases. The Programme of Action calls upon all countries to provide primary health care to all and to make efforts to ensure a longer and healthier life for their populations. It sets quantitative goals urging high-mortality countries to achieve a life expectancy at birth greater than 70 years by 2015 and the rest to achieve a life expectancy at birth greater than 75 years by the same date (para. 8.5). Achievement of those goals would imply that major progress had been made in combating the major causes of death in poor countries and in providing adequate sanitation and health services to most people on the planet. The full implementation of the Programme of Action would ensure access to health-care services for all people and especially for the most underserved and vulnerable groups.

1. Reducing mortality in childhood

35. The Programme of Action urged that by 2000, under-five mortality should be reduced by one third or to a maximum of 70 deaths per 1,000 births in all countries, and that under-five mortality should decline to below 45 deaths per 1,000 births in all countries by 2015 (para. 8.16), a goal consistent with the United Nations Millennium Declaration's goal of reducing under-five mortality by two thirds between 1990 and 2015. The measures proposed to achieve this goal are summarized in the key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action as follows: Governments should continue to support reductions in child mortality "by strengthening infant and child health programmes that emphasize improved prenatal care and nutrition, including breastfeeding, unless it is medically contraindicated, universal immunization, oral rehydration therapies, clean water sources, infectious disease prevention, reduction of exposure to toxic substances, and improvements in household sanitation; and by strengthening maternal health services, quality family-planning services to help couples to time and space births, and efforts to prevent transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases" (para. 18 (a)). Clearly, implementation of these measures would contribute to the attainment of the goals set.

36. Other measures included in the Programme of Action whose implementation would also contribute to the reduction of child mortality are: the reduction of poverty; the increase of educational attainment, especially among women; the improvement of maternal health; the promotion of the empowerment and equality of women; and the reduction of the spread of HIV/AIDS. These measures, which are consistent with several of the goals contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, illustrate the synergies existing between the mutually reinforcing development goals and actions recommended by the Programme of Action.

2. Improving maternal health

37. Ensuring women's health is a major concern of the Programme of Action. In that respect, its implementation would contribute to realizing the basic right contained in article 12 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[8] which states:

> "1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of healthcare in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health-care services, including those related to family planning.
>
> "2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation."

38. To realize this right, the Programme of Action calls for an expansion of "the provision of maternal health services in the context of primary health care. These services, based on the concept of informed choice, should include education on safe motherhood, prenatal care that is focused and effective, maternal nutrition programmes, adequate delivery assistance that avoids excessive recourse to caesarean sections and provides for obstetric emergencies; referral services for pregnancy, childbirth and abortion complications; post-natal care; and family planning. All births should be assisted by trained persons, preferably nurses and midwives, but at least by trained birth attendants" (para. 8.22). In addition, the Programme of Action urges countries to reduce maternal mortality by one half between 1990 and 2000, and by a further one half by 2015 (para. 8.21). This goal is equivalent to that of reducing the maternal mortality ratio by 75 per cent between 1990 and 2015 as called for by the United Nations Millennium Declaration, that is to say, implementation of the Programme of Action would fulfil the Millennium Declaration goal.

39. A key preventive measure to reduce a woman's lifetime probability of dying from pregnancy-related causes is to ensure access to family planning to avoid unwanted pregnancies. In addition, the presence of a trained attendant at delivery and access to emergency obstetric care are essential to preventing deaths occurring because of complications during delivery. Providing access to quality services for the management of complications arising from abortion and offering post-abortion counselling, education and family planning services so as to help prevent repeat abortions (para. 8.25), are also measures needed to reduce the risks of maternal death. The avoidance of early marriage and of pregnancy among very young women is also conducive to the reduction of maternal mortality (para. 8.24), as are strategies to reduce the spread of HIV. The Programme of Action calls for all these actions and also notes that, to enhance the effectiveness of programmes for the improvement of maternal health, it is important to engage men's support (para. 8.22).

40. The implementation of all these measures and the achievement of lower maternal mortality, particularly among the vulnerable and underserved population groups, would improve not only the health of women, but also that of their children, and the well-being of their families, thus contributing to reducing child mortality and malnutrition.

3. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

41. The Programme of Action recognizes that infectious and parasitic diseases continue to be a major affliction of large numbers of people. To combat them, it suggests that developing countries be assisted in producing generic drugs for their domestic markets so as to ensure the wide availability and accessibility of such drugs (para. 8.9). This recommendation is complementary to the call in the United Nations Millennium Declaration for the pharmaceutical industry to make essential drugs more widely available to and affordable by all who need them in developing countries. In addition, the Programme of Action calls upon all countries to ensure "a safe and sanitary living environment for all population groups through measures aimed at avoiding crowded housing conditions, reducing air pollution, ensuring access to clean water and sanitation, improving waste management, and increasing the safety of the workplace" (para. 8.10). Although no explicit mention is made of the provision of insecticide-treated netting to protect humans against the bite of the mosquito that transmits malaria, such measures would also be necessary to combat the spread of that disease. Both access to adequate treatment and the implementation of preventive measures to avoid infection are necessary in order to reduce the spread of diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, and implementation of the Programme of Action would contribute towards making this a reality.

42. With respect to HIV/AIDS, the Programme of Action underscores the disastrous consequences of the epidemic for individuals, communities and entire nations. It therefore emphasizes the need for measures to prevent the spread of HIV and to treat and support those infected. One of its objectives is therefore "(t)o ensure that HIV-infected individuals have adequate medical care and are not discriminated against; to provide counselling and other support for people infected with HIV and to alleviate the suffering of people living with AIDS and that of their family members, especially orphans; to ensure that the individual rights and the confidentiality of persons infected with HIV are respected; and to ensure that sexual and reproductive health programmes address HIV infection and AIDS" (para. 8.29 (b)). This objective, if achieved, would palliate the negative effects of the disease.

43. Whereas the Programme of Action does not include quantitative targets regarding HIV/AIDS, the key actions for its further implementation do, by calling for a reduction by 2005 of global HIV prevalence among persons aged 15-24 and for a 25 per cent reduction in that prevalence in the most affected countries. It also calls for a 25 per cent reduction by 2010 of global HIV prevalence among those aged 15-24 (para. 70). Achievement of these goals would therefore contribute directly to the goal included in the United Nations Millennium Declaration of having halted or begun to reverse the spread of HIV by 2015. Reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS would also contribute to the achievement of other development goals, including the reduction of poverty, the reduction of child mortality and the reduction of maternal mortality.

44. To combat the spread of HIV, the Programme of Action attaches "high priority to information, education and communication campaigns to raise awareness and emphasize behavioural change. Sex education and information should be provided to both those infected and those not infected, and especially to adolescents" (para. 8.31). It also suggests that "(w)herever possible, reproductive health programmes, including family-planning programmes, should include facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of common sexually transmitted diseases" (ibid.) since the latter are

known to be factors facilitating infection by HIV. Emphasis is given to the promotion of responsible sexual behaviour, including voluntary sexual abstinence, and its inclusion in education and information programmes. Wide availability of affordable condoms and drugs for the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases is recommended, and action to control the quality of blood products and equipment decontamination is stressed (para. 8.35). All these measures plus making information, education and counselling for responsible sexual behaviour and effective prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, integral components of all reproductive and sexual health services (para. 7.32) and facilitating the distribution of condoms through those services (para. 7.33) would contribute significantly to the control of the epidemic.

45. The Programme of Action stresses the importance of providing young people and adolescents of both sexes with the information and education needed to prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, and the need to ensure that adolescent and adult men take responsibility for their own sexual health and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Full implementation of these measures, together with the provisions aimed at improving the status of women and empowering them, would greatly contribute to reducing the transmission of HIV in contexts where the subordination of women to men and the weak economic position of women have constituted a factor promoting the spread of the disease, particularly among women.

G. Challenges of changing population and age distributions

1. Improving livelihoods in an urbanizing world

46. Over the next 15 years, the growth in the world population will be absorbed mainly by urban areas of developing countries, and the world's population will become more urban than rural. As a result, extreme poverty, which has until now been more common in rural than in urban areas, will become increasingly an urban phenomenon. In most developing countries, where urban-dwellers have better access to education and health services than do rural inhabitants, rural-urban migration is a means of improving the access of migrants to such services and of improving their livelihoods. Nevertheless, the rapid pace of urbanization has strained the capacity of Governments to provide adequate services to urban-dwellers and the number of persons living in slums has been rising, amounting to about 900 million today. In this light, the goal of improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, one of the goals set forth in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, is a modest one.

47. Although not all slum dwellers are poor, those having the greatest needs are among the poor and underserved populations focused on by the Programme of Action when it stresses the importance of providing underserved groups with "information, education, jobs, skill development and reproductive health services" (para. 3.19). To achieve the improvement of the lives of slum dwellers, programmes aimed specifically at improving their access to basic services are necessary. The Programme of Action provides guidance on the types of improvements required and, implicitly, recognizes the importance of targeting programmes to satisfy the particular needs of underserved population groups. It also calls upon Governments "to respond to the needs of all citizens, including urban squatters, for personal safety, basic infrastructure and services, to eliminate the health and social problems"

in urban agglomerations (para. 9.14) and "to improve the plight of the urban poor ... by facilitating their access to employment, credit, production, marketing opportunities, basic education, health services, vocational training and transportation" (para. 9.15). A full implementation of these recommendations would certainly contribute to improving the lives of slum dwellers.

2. Population ageing

48. The number and proportion of older people are expected to continue increasing over the foreseeable future, leading to population age distributions unprecedented in human history. Given the social and economic implications of such changes, "(i)t is essential to integrate the evolving process of global ageing within the larger process of development", as stated in paragraph 9 of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,[9] adopted by the Second World Assembly on Ageing, held in Madrid from 8 to 12 April 2002. The Programme of Action of The International Conference on Population and Development recognizes that elderly people constitute a valuable and important component of a society's human resources and recommends a series of measures to ensure that elderly persons are able to work and live independently as long as possible or as desired. These measures include the development of social security systems that ensure greater inter-generational and intra-generational equity and solidarity (para. 6.18); facilitating the use of the skills and abilities of older persons for the benefit of society (para. 6.19); valuing and recognizing the contribution that elderly people make to families and society (para. 6.19); and strengthening formal and informal support systems for elderly people, with special attention to the needs of elderly women (para. 6.20). These measures contribute to empowering elderly persons and promoting their full participation in society, as called for by the International Plan of Action on Ageing.

H. Developing a global partnership for development

49. The Programme of Action gives considerable attention to the ways and means by which its recommendations may be implemented. In particular, it includes cost estimates for the major components of basic national programmes on population and reproductive health, programmes aimed at providing reproductive health services to all who need them. The Programme of Action acknowledges that domestic resources provide the largest portion of the funds needed, estimating that only about a third of those costs would come from external sources. The least developed countries and other low-income developing countries would require a greater share of external resources on a concessional and grant basis.

50. Recalling that international cooperation has been essential for the implementation of population and development programmes in the past, the Programme of Action notes that international cooperation has become increasingly important and varied because "(c)ountries that formerly attached minimal importance to population issues now recognize them at the core of their development challenge. International migration and AIDS, for instance ... are currently high-priority issues in a large number of countries" (para. 14.1). Consequently, the Programme of Action encourages Governments to build partnerships with multilateral and donor agencies, civil society (including community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations) and the private sector, as appropriate, for the purpose of undertaking projects or developing

programmes for the implementation of its recommendations. It also calls upon the international community to support South-South collaborative arrangements and facilitate direct South-South cooperation. At the programme level, it recommends national capacity-building for population and development and transfer of appropriate technology and know-how to developing countries. It also reiterates the call for the international community to "strive for the fulfilment of the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for overall official development assistance and endeavour to increase the share of funding for population and development programmes commensurate with the scope and scale of activities required to achieve the objectives and goals" of the Programme of Action (para. 14.11). The implementation of these recommendations would not only ensure the achievement of those goals and objectives but also contribute to building the global partnership for development called for in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

IV. Conclusions

51. **Population is at the core of development, and population trends are a key element of the context in which development takes place. Consequently, measures directed towards influencing demographic behaviour and population dynamics, such as those contained in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for its further implementation, would, if fully implemented, contribute significantly to the achievement of universally agreed development goals, including those in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.**

52. **Implementation of the Programme of Action, particularly of measures to ensure that all couples and individuals have the number of children they desire and the information, education and means to do so would contribute to accelerating the transition to low fertility in developing countries that still have high fertility levels, and would produce slower population growth, which in turn would improve the ability of those countries to adjust to future population increases, to combat poverty, to protect and repair the environment, and to set the conditions for sustainable development. Even the difference of a single decade in the transition to stabilization levels of fertility can have a considerable positive impact on quality of life.**

53. **Furthermore, reduction of fertility gives rise to the "demographic bonus" whereby the proportion of the population of working age increases relative to that of children and the elderly, a change that can contribute significantly to economic growth and poverty reduction in contexts where governance facilitates human resource development and employment creation. Implementation of other recommendations included in the Programme of Action regarding the provision of education to all, especially girls and women, and increased investment in human resource development would also contribute to ensuring the benefits of the demographic bonus.**

54. **Fulfilment of the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action would ensure the achievement of equivalent goals included in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, particularly reduction of child mortality and maternal mortality, universal access to primary education, parity in access to secondary and higher education between boys and girls, reductions in the spread of HIV,**

and achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. Because of synergies between these goals and other universally agreed development goals, further benefits would be reaped.

55. **For instance, implementation of the Programme of Action would lead to both the empowerment of women in all spheres of life and a greater involvement of men in the exercise of reproductive rights and responsibilities. These achievements would contribute to enhancing economic growth and reducing poverty, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, and reducing the spread of HIV. Similarly, improvements in education, particularly of girls, would contribute to reducing poverty, hunger, child and maternal mortality, and the spread of HIV, as well as promote gender equality. Furthermore, a better-educated population would likely change its demographic behaviour with respect to nuptiality, fertility, health and migration in ways leading to greater well-being.**

56. **The Programme of Action offers guidance on ways of addressing the major challenges of the future, including increasing urbanization and population ageing, so that its fulfilment would contribute to the attainment of the objectives set both by the United Nations Millennium Declaration and by the Second World Assembly on Ageing. The Programme of Action also focuses special attention on the needs of vulnerable groups, including children and youth, the elderly, the poor, the disabled and indigenous populations, and stresses the need to provide support and protection to families, especially single-parent families, and to vulnerable family members, such as orphans and widows. Consequently, full implementation of the Programme of Action would benefit all segments of society, particularly the most vulnerable, and lead to less inequality. It would also promote the equal participation and sharing of responsibility of women and men in all areas of family and community life.**

57. **Implementation of the Programme of Action depends crucially on building a partnership for global development where all actors, including Governments, multilateral and donor agencies, civil society and the private sector, cooperate to realize its goals and objectives. In this way, it would validate the importance of the goals included in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and contribute to underscoring that international cooperation is essential for the implementation of population and development programmes, particularly in the least developed and other low-income developing countries.**

Notes

[1] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[2] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[3] General Assembly resolution S-21/2, annex.

[4] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[5] General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

[6] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II

[7] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[8] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

[9] *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8-12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.